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MBDA Assists More than 20,000 Minority Businesses in FY 2006 *Federal program facilitates \$1.6 billion in contracts and loans*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Minority Business Development Agency, the chief federal agency created to support minority businesses and part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, today reported final results for the fiscal year 2006. Through its 40-plus funded centers in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, MBDA assisted 20,000 minority business enterprises with securing new contracts and financial awards totaling \$1.6 billion, exceeding the national goal by 23 percent last year. MBDA has consulted with more than 3,600 clients on management and technical needs and provided over 43,000 hours of direct service. MBDA was instrumental in the success of one client, GVCwinstar, in becoming the largest privately owned minority-owned telecommunications company in the world.

"We have been focused on improving the efficiency and execution of the Agency's programs and services to meet the growing needs of our clients. Successes reflect the dedication and hard work of the MBDA team and our network," said MBDA National Director Ronald N. Langston. "Over the past year, through our Centers and Agency staff, more than 20,000 minority-owned firms have received some type of assistance and training to grow their businesses. We are extremely proud that our efforts have translated into 4,200 new job opportunities at minority-owned firms, which builds a stronger U.S. economy."

Under the direction of National Director Langston, the Agency has rigorously improved its government accountability and performance management. Also contributing to the Agency's success is its highly attended Business to Business (B2B) Linkage Forums encouraging joint ventures and mentor protégé agreements among minority businesses.

For MBDA, forging partnerships with prominent organizations, such as the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Foundation, the National Urban League, the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, and equity and debt venture capitalists, are key to improving opportunities for the minority business community. The Agency was a key sponsor for the National Urban League's first-ever *Marketplace*, providing small minority businesses a chance to showcase their services to potential buyers at the national conference. The U.S. Indian American Chamber of Commerce, National Black Chamber of Commerce, Native American Business Alliance and U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce are just a few other organizations MBDA supported in FY2006.

"MBDA plays a vital role in the U.S. economy. Minority businesses are becoming an increasingly important component of the entrepreneurial economy, which is the growth engine for the future," said Leonard Greenhalgh, PhD, Professor of Management, and Director, Programs for Minority-and Women-Owned Business Enterprises at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth.

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He added: "In most cases, these entrepreneurs know how to deliver services or manufacture products, but lack the requisite business acumen in their early years. As a result, MBDA and its funded organizations provide the ongoing support, providing access to capital, access to contracts, and consulting advice. The results it generates--in terms of wealth and job creation in minority communities--benefit everyone in the nation."

In response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, MBDA redirected services to meet the needs of the Gulf coast minority business community, resulting in the opening of two new Minority Business Centers—one in the state of Louisiana focused on procurement opportunities and one in Alabama providing management and technical assistance. Two additional Centers, one in Mississippi and another one in Louisiana, are slated to open in early 2007. Already, MBDA has held two minority business forums in the Gulf on public and private contract opportunities.

In addition, MBDA has assisted hundreds of displaced minority firms to prepare and submit applications for disaster relief, emergency loans and insurance claims; reconstruct business plans and other key business documents; identified over 1,500 procurement opportunities for minority firms and conducted education and outreach activities reaching more than 12,000 minority businesses.

Adding value to minority businesses is the goal of MBDA. Last year, the Agency released a report on the state of minority business enterprises in the U.S. and issued a report on strategies for mastering domestic and global supply chains. The Agency's annual 2006 National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference also focused on supply chain management for minority businesses. MBDA received comments indicating this event was extremely valuable in positioning MBEs for enhanced supply chain management.

"As we move forward into 2007, we will be building upon our current successes in managing relationships, facilitating financial transactions and assisting more clients. In 2007 the Agency's priorities include continued assistance to minority businesses in the Gulf coast and supporting minority businesses in trade opportunities and promoting the Presidents' American Competitiveness Initiative," said Langston. "Consequently this year's 25th Anniversary National MED Week Conference will be on innovative minority businesses gaining a competitive edge in the creative economy in Washington, DC.

In addition to the National Director Langston, MBDA is led by a management team reflective of the burgeoning minority enterprise sector. Ninety-five percent of the Agency's senior leadership is comprised of minority men and women. Of all MBDA managers, African Americans account for 50% and Hispanics represent 30%, while Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and Whites account for the remaining twenty percent. Minority women represent 55% of all MBDA senior managers. MBDA employees are well trained and experienced, too. Over 60% have a baccalaureate or post-graduate degree; and the average number of years a MBDA Business Development Specialist has been serving at MBDA is fourteen years.

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About the Minority Business Development Agency, U.S. Department of Commerce

Founded in 1969 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in this Nation. The Agency actively promotes the strategic growth and competitiveness of large, medium and small minority business enterprises by offering management and technical assistance through a network of forty local business centers throughout the United States. Statistics on minority businesses and resources to build minority businesses are available at www.mbda.gov.